



Facing the Facts

A Review of Hispanic Health Data

1994

*A Fact Sheet produced by the
ASPIRA National Health Careers Program*

Hispanic Representation in Health Fields

- According to the 1990 U.S. Census, Hispanics comprise 9.0% of the total population. In the field of health, however, Hispanics represent only 4.9% of all physicians, 1.7% of dentists, 5.3% of health administrators and nutritionists, 2.9% of registered nurses, and 2.8% of Public Health Service employees. (Bureau of Census, 1990)
- Hispanics represent only 5.2% of students enrolled in medical education in the fall of 1993. Mexican-Americans are 2.3% and Puerto Ricans are 1.9% of all enrollees. (Association of American Medical Colleges, November, 1993)

- Less than three percent (2.5%) of faculty members in American medical schools are Hispanic. Mexican-Americans are 0.3%, Puerto Ricans are 0.7%, and other Hispanics are 1.5% of all faculty. (Association of American Medical Colleges, November, 1993)

Access to Health Care

- Hispanics are more often employed in jobs without health insurance benefits than are Whites. If Hispanics had the same rate of coverage as Whites, the percentage of Hispanics with no insurance at all would drop from 35% to 18%. (National Center for Health Services Research and Health Care Technology Assessment, NMES, 1987)

- Hispanics are the single group most likely to be uninsured. The latest Census figures indicate that in 1992, 33% of Hispanics were uninsured, compared to 14% of Whites and 20% of Blacks. (Congressional Hispanic Caucus News Release, 1993)



Dr. Maria Segarra, Office of Minority Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and Dr. Elagin Gonzalez, ophthalmologist at Bronx-Lebanon Hospital, talk seriously about Latino health issues during an ASPIRA Health Careers panel meeting.

- Hispanics often lack a regular source of health care: 64% of all Hispanics have a regular source of care compared with 80% of the total population. (Healthy People 2000, Sept. 1990)

- Hispanics often receive medical attention in an emergency room, and thus do not receive proper screening or prevention treatment. Nearly 10% of Hispanics identified the hospital emergency room as a regular source of medical care compared with 4% of White non-Hispanics. (Congressional Hispanic Caucus News Release, 1993)

Maternal and Child Health

- As the graph below indicates, the fertility rates for Latino subgroups in 1991 per 1,000 women ages 15-44, were:

Mexican-American	121.6
Puerto Rican	80.9
Cuban American	49.1
other Hispanic	99.3

(National Center for Health Statistics, 1991)



- Infant mortality figures for 1991 include Mexican American, 3,057; Puerto Rican, 371; Cuban American, 63; Central and South American, 270; other Hispanic, 543; White, 18,018; African American, 10,840 deaths. (National Center for Health Statistics, 1991)

- Sixty-three percent of Hispanic mothers begin prenatal care in the first trimester, as do 81% of White women and 61.5% of African-Americans. Within the Hispanic subgroups, 58.7% of Mexican-Americans, 65.0% of Puerto Ricans, 85.4% of Cuban

Americans, and 53.4% of Central and South Americans begin prenatal care in their first trimester. (National Center for Health Statistics, 1991)

Substance Abuse

- In a 1988 study of 27 metropolitan areas in the United States, 13% of drug-related deaths occurred among Hispanics. (NIDA, 1990)
- Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis is the 6th leading cause of death for Hispanic men, at 43%.
- Forty-one percent of Mexican Americans who died from alcohol-related problems did so before age 50, compared to 30% of Whites who died from alcohol-related problems. (National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Abuse, 1992)
- In 1993, 29% of Hispanics reported they had ever used an illicit drug, while 10.8% had used an illicit drug in the past year and 5.3% had used an illicit drug in the past month. 9.7% of Hispanics had ever used cocaine, while 3.7% of Hispanics had used in the past year, and 1.2% Hispanics had used in the past month. (National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Abuse, 1992)
- Puerto Ricans and Cuban Americans aged 12 through 17 report higher rates of cocaine use than do either whites or blacks, and Mexican Americans have higher rates of marijuana use. (National Coalition of Hispanic Health and Human Services Organizations, 1988)

● Of Hispanics who use drugs intravenously, about 41% have never been in treatment. Relatively high proportions of Hispanic clients were reported in Arizona, California, New Mexico, New York, and Texas. (National Drug and Alcoholism Treatment Unit Survey-1987 Final Report, NIDA; NIDA AIDS Demonstration Research National Database, November 1989)

● Hispanic teenagers of both genders smoke more than do either non-Hispanic black or non-Hispanic white teenagers. Similarly, Hispanic teenagers report heavy drinking of alcoholic beverages more frequently than do white or black teenagers. (National Coalition of Hispanic Health and Human Services Organizations, 1988)

AIDS and Hispanics

● Hispanics, while representing approximately 9% of the U.S. population, account for 16.5% of all AIDS cases. (CDC, HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report, March 1993)

● As of 1993, Hispanic women accounted for 20.4% of women diagnosed with AIDS, while Hispanic men accounted for 15.9% of all men diagnosed as having AIDS. (CDC's quarterly HIV/AIDS surveillance report, March 1993)

● AIDS is the sixth most frequent cause of death for Hispanics and the eighth most frequent cause of death for Whites. (CDC, HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report, March 1993)

● Hispanic children under 13 account for 24.2% (1,082) of total reported pediatric AIDS cases. (CDC, HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report, March 1993)

● Of the 491 Hispanic children under the age of 13

who had developed AIDS by December, 1989, more than 70% were born to mothers whose risk for contracting the HIV infection had been associated with their own intravenous drug abuse or sex with an intravenous drug abuser. (CDC, HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report, January 1990)

Hispanic Elderly

● Nationally, heart disease is the number one cause of death for Hispanics (38.3%) and whites (41.7%), ages 65 and over. (National Center for Health Statistics, 1989)

● Twice as many Hispanic elderly die of diabetes, chronic liver disease, and cirrhosis than non-Hispanics. 1.3 million Hispanics over the age of 21, or 10% of the adult Hispanic population, have diabetes. (National Center for Health Statistics, 1989)

Migrant Farm Workers

● The infant mortality rate among migrant farm workers is 25% higher than the national average. (Monthly Vital Statistics Report Supplement, September 26, 1989)

● The average life expectancy for a migrant farm worker is 49 years, as compared to the national life expectancy of 75 years. (Monthly Vital Statistics Report Supplement, September 26, 1989)

● The rate of parasitic infection in migrant farm workers is 50 times that of the total population. (Monthly Vital Statistics Report Supplement, September 26, 1989)

Leading Causes of Death

- The following chart shows leading causes of death for Hispanics and white non-Hispanics in 18 states and the District of the Columbia, as a percent of total

information include unreliable Hispanic origin statistics reported by the states, lack of critical patient level information, and noninclusion of Hispanic identifiers. In summary, there has been insufficient analysis of Hispanic health data to provide decisive results, especially in regard to morbidity and mortality.

The Ten Leading Causes of Death

Rank	Hispanics	White non-Hispanics
1	Heart Disease	25%
2	Cancer	17%
3	Injuries	9%
4	Stroke	6%
5	Homicide	5%
6	Liver Disease	3%
7	Pneumonia/Influenza	3%
8	Diabetes	3%
9	HIV Infection	3%
10	Perinatal conditions	3%
	Heart Disease	37%
	Cancer	23%
	Stroke	7%
	Chronic Lung Disease	4%
	Injuries	4%
	Pneumonia/Influenza	4%
	Diabetes	2%
	Suicide	2%
	Atherosclerosis	1%
	Liver Disease	1%

Monthly Vital Statistics Report Supplement September 26, 1989

deaths in 1987. (It should be noted that more recent data from the Centers for Disease Control show the ascent of AIDS in the rank of leading causes of death for both Hispanics and non-Hispanics.)

Availability of Hispanic Health Data

The first comprehensive survey of Hispanic health was the Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) conducted in 1982-84. The next NHANES survey, however, will not be completed until later in 1994. Other surveys and records available, such as the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS), lack precise information on Hispanic subgroups or are not up to date. Additional barriers to the availability of accurate national Hispanic health

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Sources:

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